

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4367

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 4348

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PGOV, SHUM, NU

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S FIRST MEETING WITH SOMOZA

SUMMARY: AT REQUEST OF PRESIDENT SOMOZA, AMBASSADOR MET WITH HIM FOR SLIGHTLY LESS THAN AN HOUR AT MONTELIBAR. DURING THIS CORDIAL GETTING ACQUAINTED SESSION, TOPICS COVERED WERE GENERAL POLITICS, HUMAN RIGHTS, CUBA, MILGP STAFFING, AND THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE AMBASSADOR TO THE PRESIDENT. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT SOMOZA REQUESTED INFORMAL MEETING AT MONTELIBAR AT 1700 ON SEPTEMBER 19. SOMOZA APPEARED TO HAVE SIGNIFICANTLY SLIMMED DOWN, BUT WAS WALKING AND TALKING SLIGHTLY HESITANTLY. A NURSE INTERRUPTED THE MEETING AFTER ABOUT FIFTY MINUTES.

2. SOMOZA DISCUSSED THE ROLE OF THE U.S. AMBASSADOR IN NICARAGUA, SPECIFICALLY REFERRING TO THE DIFFERENCE IN STYLE AND RELATIONSHIP OF OUR RECENT SEVERAL AMBASSADORS. HE SAID HE THOUGHT THERE WERE PROBLEMS WITH THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION'S ATTITUDES TOWARD HIS GOVERNMENT, THAT HIS ANTI-COMMUNISM DIDN'T WIN HIM ANY SUPPORT, AND THAT HE KNEW THE AMBASADOR'S INSTRUCTIONS WERE TO BE QUOTE DISTANCIADO UNQUOTE (REMOTE). AMBASSADOR SAID HE DID NOT LIKE THAT WORD BUT SAW HIS ROLE MORE AS AUTONOMOUS, SO THAT EACH WOULD BE ABLE TO CARRY OUT HIS SEPARATE ROLE. HE SAID THAT HE WAS HERE NEITHER TO PROVIDE SUPPORT FOR THE GON NOR TO ORGANIZE THE OPPO-
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SITION TO OVERTHROW IT. SOMOZA SAID HE WAS QUOTE COOL HEADED BUT DILIGENT UNQUOTE AND THAT HE NEEDED AN OPEN RELATIONSHIP WITH THE AMBASSADOR BASED ON MUTUAL TRUST.

3. AMBASSADOR REFERRED TO THE BAD IMAGE WHICH NICARAGUA HAD AMONG AMERICANS, PARTICULARLY LIBERALS, DUE LARGELY TO THE RUNNING OF NICARAGUA BY THE SOMOZAS FOR OVER FORTY YEARS. SOMOZA ACKNOW-

LEDGED THE PROBLEM AND PRESENTED HIS APOLOGIA IN TERMS OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH REQUIRED HIS BROTHER LUIS TO TAKE OVER WHEN THEIR FATHER WAS ASSASSINATED AND HOW HE HAD TO HELP HIS BROTHER. HE SAID PRESIDENT SCHICK HAD NEEDED HIS HELP ALSO DURING HIS TERM. HE HAD NOT WANTED TO RUN FOR A SECOND TERM, HE SAID, BUT BECAUSE OF THE 1972 EARTHQUAKE EVERYBODY URGED HIM TO DO SO.

4. IN DISCUSSING THE CONCERN OF THE U.S. FOR THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION, THE AMBASSADOR SAID HE FELT LIFTING THE MARTIAL LAW WAS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT, BUT THAT HE COULD NOT YET ESTIMATE THE CONSEQUENCES IN THE U.S. OR TO U.S. POLICY.

5. SOMOZA RAISED THE QUESTION OF MILGP MANNING. AMBASSADOR REPLIED THERE WAS NO DECISION YET BUT THAT IT WOULD BE FROM THREE TO SIX MEMBERS. HE SAID HE WAS INCLINED TO SUPPORT A LEVEL OF SIX MILITARY. SOMOZA INDICATED HE THOUGHT THS WOULD BE IN KEEPING WITH THE IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S. IN WORLD AFFAIRS BUT WOULD LIVE WITH WHATEVER THE OUTCOME.

6. CUBA WAS RAISED BY AMBASSADOR IN TERMS OF THE HUM RIGHTS ISSUE. HE SAID IF RELATIONS WITH CUBA ALREADY EXISTED, THE EXILES WOULD BE HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPIONS TRYING TO LIBERALIZE CUBA. CASTRO HAS MORE TO FEAR FROM RENEWED RELATIONS THAN THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE GREATER STRENGTH OF AN OPEN SOCIETY VIS-A-VIS A CLOSED ONE. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THE EXILE COMMUNITY WOULD COME TO BE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE IF RELATIONS SHOULD BE NORMALIZED. SOMOZA SAID HE HAD CONFIDENTIAL

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TOLD EXILES THE SAME THING AND RECOGNIZED THE ADVANTAGES OF NORMALIZED U.S.-CUBA RLEATIONS.

7. SOMOZA SUGGESTED TENTATIVELY PLANNING ON SEPTEMBER 30 FOR PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS. HE WANTS TO CONTINUE THE TRADITIONAL CEREMONY FOR PRESENTATION, IF POSSIBLE.

8. AT THE END OF THE METING SOMOZA EXPRESSED HIS APPRECIATION TO PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE U.S. FOR THE ASSISTANCE RENDERED TO HIM BY MEDICALLY EVACUATING HIM TO MIAMI AND TOLD THE AMBASSADOR TO PLEASE CONVEY THIS MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT CARTER.

9. COMMENT: THE SESSION PROGRESSED FROM SOMOZA BEING SLIGHTLY EDGY OR WARY TO AN OPEN CORDIAL EXCHANGE, AND IT AUGERS WELL FOR FUTURE SUBSTANTIVE EXCHANGES. SOMOZA, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY SOMEWHAT STILL LIMITED PHYSICALLY, IS FULLY FUNCTIONAL BOTH PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY. OBVIOUSLY THE COMMENTS IN PARAGRAPH 3 ON THE CONTINUATION OF THE SOMOZAS IN POWER ARE PURELY THE PRESIDENT'S VERSION.
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